

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 OMB-01 CU-02 SY-05 /063 W

-----231013Z 002740 /20

R 230448Z MAY 77

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2384

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, TH

SUBJ: ALLEGED MASTERMIND OF ASSASSINATION PLOT AGAINST INTERIOR MINISTER ARRESTED

1. THAI POLICE ARRESTED PRAPHANPHONG WETCHACHIWA, VICE-RECTOR FOR STUDENT AFFAIRS, CHULALONGKON UNIVERSITY, ON MAY 21 FOR ALLEGED INVOLVEMENT IN A CONSPIRACY TO ASSASSINATE INTERIOR MINISTER SAMAK SUNTHORAWET. MR. PRAPHANPHONG, WHO HAS CATEGORICALLY DENIED THE CHARGES, IS BEING DETAINED. PRAPHANPHONG IS A MEMBER OF THE PROMINENT WETCHACHIWA FAMILY AND IS THE FIRST COUSIN OF NITSAI AND WITTHAYA WETCHACHIWA, HIGH-RANKING OFFICIALS IN THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

2. ACCORDING TO THE THAI PRESS OF MAY 23, PRAPHANPHONG WAS IMPLICATED IN THE ASSASSINATION PLOT BY TWO MEN ARRESTED ON MAY 20 WHO HAD CONFESSED TO PLANS TO ASSASSINATE SAMAK. THE TWO MEN ARE CHATRI TOEMNGAM, FORMER ASSISTANT SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE VOCATIONAL STUDENT CENTER OF THAILAND, AND CHIRAPHONG ROTTHONG, RAMKHAMHAENG UNIVERSITY STUDENT AND SON OF THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF THE DEFENSE MINISTRY SECRETARIAT, MG SANGIAM ROTTHONG.

3. THE TWO SUSPECTS CONFESSED TO TWO PREVIOUS PLANNED

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ATTEMPTS WHICH WERE NOT CARRIED OUT AND A FUTURE ONE WHICH WAS THWARTED BY THEIR ARREST. THEY SAID THEY HAD NO GRUDGES AGAINST SAMAK AS SUCH AND WERE QUOTED IN THE NATION REVIEW AS SAYING THAT THE "MASTERMIND" TOLD THEM THE ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT WAS FOR "THE BENEFIT OF THE COUNTRY--NOT PERSONAL GAIN." THE POLICE ARE SEEKING AT LEAST THREE OTHER PERSONS FOR COMPLICITY IN

THE ALLEGED PLOT.

4. COMMENT: ON THE BASIS OF THE INFO. SO FAR AVAILABLE,
IT IS NOT RPT NOT CLEAR WHY SAMAK SHOULD HAVE BEEN
SINGLED OUT FOR AN ASSASSINATION PLOT. HE HAD, OF
COURSE, BEEN THE OBJECT OF ANOTHER ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT
IN LAMPANG IN MAR. SAMAK IS AN ARTICULATE FIGURE WHO
IS HIGHLY UNPOPULAR WITH A BROAD RANGE OF ACADEMIC AND
INTELLECTUAL FIGURES IN THAILAND, BUT THE ARREST OF
PRAPHANPHONG IS THE FIRST INDICATION THAT DISAPPROVAL OF
SAMAK MAY HAVE LED TO ARRANGEMENTS FOR HIS ASSASSINATION.
WHITEHOUSE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ASSASSINATION, PRESS COMMENTS, ARRESTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 23-May-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977BANGKO11050
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770182-1219
Format: TEL
From: BANGKOK
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770530/aaaaaznl.tel
Line Count: 74
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: acd8428c-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 11-Jan-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2417053
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ALLEGED MASTERMIND OF ASSASSINATION PLOT AGAINST INT- -ERIOR MINISTER ARRESTED
TAGS: PGOV, PINT, TH, (PRAPHANPHONG WETCHACHIWA), (SAMAK SUNTHORAWET)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/acd8428c-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009